

# HOPE STREET

Spring/Summer 2010 **NEWS**



## A CAR BREAKING DOWN IS ALWAYS BAD...RIGHT?

By Andrew Dawkins

Have you ever had something go wrong, felt frustrated and as if nothing good could possibly come out of the situation? Well, that was my experience just recently, following a mishap with my car.

Whilst standing on the Railway Station the afternoon my car broke down, I saw a man walking slowly in my direction, he was dishevelled, pushing a trolley, head bowed and wearing a garbage bag as a raincoat.

We boarded the train and sat opposite each other in an end compartment. Keeping a tight grip on his trolley, he remained head bowed and silent. What happened next shocked and angered me. One by one the five other people in our compartment moved but not to disembark. Obvious gestures of rejection. I remained seated opposite him watching this all unfold.

What was happening here? Was this man in possession of a bomb? Was he carrying some horrible infectious disease mysteriously diagnosed by these five people? Was he a physical threat?

I think, none of the above. To them, he was an object of fear.

What should I do? Round up “the gang of five” and launch into a motivational speech about caring for the poor? Go and sit with the man and explain that I would never do what these people just did? No, instead, I felt ashamed to realise that there have been many times in the past when I would have been the sixth person to leave the carriage.

The experience of this man represents what HopeStreet seeks to rectify. Instead of fear and rejection, we offer acceptance, love, hope and affirmation to people. We have an almost prophetic role to play in communicating to those five people from the train and indeed the broader community that the man with the trolley has far more to fear from us than we have to fear from him.

So ..... next time your car breaks down and you have to catch the train ... look for the bigger plan being formulated behind the scene!

## NEW FACES AT HOPESTREET



**NAME:** Beth

**ROLE:** Fundraising Coordinator

Beth joined the HopeStreet team in July 2010 as the Fundraising Coordinator in the Relationships and Communications area.

*I feel incredibly blessed and privileged to be a part of the community of HopeStreet. I heard about HopeStreets' grass roots and holistic approach to urban missions as I became involved in other inner city ministries and was always attracted to the core values and ethics so clearly displayed. As a fundraiser I'm excited about bridging the gap and apparent stigma that exists between the 'rich' and 'poor' of our society.*

*I'm passionate about loving life and living scared. If I'm not doing something that scares me, I'm not living. If you can't find me at my desk planning the next party or fun run, I'll either be drinking good coffee, writing a play, on a stage, travelling or laughing over wine with my friends. Bono says, "We can't lose because we're putting our shoulder to a door that God Almighty has already opened".*

## COMING UP

### **Annual Art Exhibition:**

9 – 21 November 2010 at 182 Campbell St, Surry Hills. Don't miss out, you'll be blown away by the talent of some of Sydney's best kept secrets. Tickets for the launch and closing events on sale in October so keep an eye on the website.

### **Christmas Hampers:**

Please start collecting non-perishable items that would be suitable to include in our Christmas Hampers. Here's some suggestions to get you started: tinned food (ring pulls are great), socks, undies, toiletries, cakes, long life custard, soft drink, decorations and special treats. Thanks for helping us to make Christmas a little more special for our communities in the inner city. Donations can be delivered to 37 St John's Rd, Glebe (entry via carpark on corner St John's Rd and Colbourne Sts) on Monday 13th December or morning of Tuesday 14th December.

## ANNUAL REPORT

Our 2009/10 Annual Report is soon to be released and will be produced as a 2011 calendar. All supporters on our mailing list will receive a complimentary calendar but we'll also have copies available for sale at just \$6 per calendar. You can help us raise funds and awareness by purchasing additional calendars to give to family and friends.

## STOP PRESS!

Thanks to all who donated so generously during our Winter Appeal. We received an amazing response with loads of warm clothing and sleeping bag/blanket donations as well as over \$30,000 in financial donations.

# HAPPY 15TH BIRTHDAY WOMEN'S SPACE

By Kaysone Syonesa

On September 1st 2010, Women's Space celebrated their 15th Anniversary. The party was attended by 30 guests who are major supporters of Women's Space. It was a wonderful opportunity to get together to recognise the importance of this ministry and to celebrate the women we serve.

Looking back over the last 15 years, it's been a journey of twists and turns. It's a place of surprises, with each day very different from the next. We never quite know what the day will present but that's the beauty of our work and we take comfort in knowing that God is at work regardless of what's happening.

During the early 1990's, Baptist Inner City Ministries (now known as HopeStreet) saw a need to offer support to women working in the sex industry. After much thought, research and prayer, Women's Space was born and, in 1995 the doors were opened to begin the work of outreach to women in the area. Within 18 months, the project had connected with approximately 150 women and 30 had become regulars to the drop-in centre, also called open house.

The original vision for Women's Space was to provide a safe place for women in the sex industry to find support, friendship and opportunity for positive life changes. The original vision also included development of an "Exit House" as stage two of this project.

Over the last 15 years, we have had 8,500 visits to the house and made 3,200 outreach connections with women in brothels and on the streets. Our current funding allows us to open Monday – Thursday mornings and to provide additional support via afternoon appointments. We're working towards securing sufficient funding that would enable us to extend our open house hours and also add extra nights to our outreach program, which is most often where our initial contacts are made and relationships are formed.

We hope to start Women's Space Stage Two residential program within the next few years. Other programs that we hope to integrate include an apprenticeship/mentorship program and a volunteer program for the women. The future for Women's Space is just as exciting and challenging, as it was when it first began in 1995.

## WHAT DOES WOMEN'S SPACE MEAN TO YOU?

"Since coming to the Women's Space, I have considered it a place of sanctuary and love for women. They can get away from 'it all' and be in a non-judgmental safe place. My vision is to see us house many of our women (those that want to be) and provide them with a thorough and supportive outreach program" – Helen Prior, Support and Outreach Worker 2010

"Women's Space celebrating 15 Years is a chance to reflect on the project and honour everyone that has been part of it. Leading up to the celebration has been a great chance to reinforce who we are and why we do what we do" – Grace Borland, Support and Outreach Worker 2010

Sanctuary, serene, safe place for nocturnal or not so dissimilar people. For those who need peace and their own personal space...an emotional release and tranquility amongst turmoil" – F

"This place called the Women's Space is a home like home where you can do anything you want to do. It's exciting" – N

"It's a place where I know I can be myself, without fear of judgment or discrimination" – M





# SUPPORTER'S SPOT

## MUCH MORE THAN JUST A MAKE-OVER!

By Jacqui Donnelly

Allowing God to take us out of our comfort zone can be a scary adventure but also life changing.

Sometime ago, I had the chance to visit HopeStreet and was so inspired that I immediately wanted to get involved. During the visit I had the opportunity to see the Women's Space, an inner city terrace house where women in the sex industry are offered a safe place to relax, be refreshed and be themselves.

As I stood in the kitchen of the house, I thought how wonderful it would be to do a 'mini-makeover' of the space. I set about phoning friends from various churches in my local area and set a weekend in June as our 'make-over' weekend. Each person was assigned to a team which in turn was responsible for a room, the teams were asked to provide anything they would require to clean and decorate their room.

The weekend of the make-over was a blur of fun, friendship, hard work and chaos. It was a wonderful time spent with a bunch of women who were excited to be able to express their love and concern for other

women, in a very different situation to themselves, in such a tangible way. The fact that they have never and may never meet the women who use this space only added to the power of this act of love.

Over the weekend, I took a walk through the neighbourhood. I visited the Street Breakfast and chatted with many locals, then only 150 metres down the road I came across more locals at a cafe, they were sipping lattes while chatting on their iphones, even their young children had their own iphones. Something was bothering me and upon retracing my steps, it hit me. I had walked such a short distance but in that time I had crossed the poverty line – this was culture shock but I was still in Australia, still in Sydney and still in Woolloomooloo.

Since then, I've been on a journey, riding a roller coaster of emotions. The following are a collection of, very raw, reflections and expressions of my experience:

I'm humbled, moved by the heartache and difficulty with which some people are forced to live.

I'm annoyed at myself and those

around me for becoming so comfortable in our circumstances when so many are living in appalling conditions. How can we shut our eyes, ears and hearts to those who are in desperate need of our help?

I've learned it's about loving the unlovely, seizing the moments that God presents and then allowing God to use me no matter what the cost. It's scary and takes courage but I believe this is the only way if we are to be true followers of Christ.

My conclusion: I'm not going to beat myself up about this but I am going to allow this experience to alter my lifestyle and I will allow God to continue challenging me.

I set out with a plan to support HopeStreet by honouring and blessing the Women at Women's Space but God had a bigger plan. I'm thankful for this experience and will continue to not only support but also to learn from HopeStreet and the people they walk alongside.

Thank you to the brave women at Women's Space for challenging me to step outside my comfort zone!



Before



After